

Essays and Contributions.

WHAT MAY WE EXPECT FROM GOD?

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Christians are slow to claim from God the full measure of blessing He is ever ready to bestow, and God never gives out His richest gifts but to those who ask for them. A consequent lack of spiritual development, Christian grace and fellowship with God is often manifest among those who confess the Lord. It is a great mistake to always dwell upon God's demands,—why he expects of us, losing sight of the infinitely greater things that He has done for us—what we may expect from Him. The former alone dwarfs the soul and feeds egotism and self-righteousness; a realization of the latter will fill our lives with a constant refrain of thanksgiving and praise. While the Word is a perfect revelation, both of God's love and our duty, it is in the nobler conception of His infinite love that the true spirit of service and devotion is fostered and abounds.

When confronted, a few days ago, with the question, "What may we expect from God?" the writer felt that familiar promises took on new shades of meaning in the light of such inquiry. Only an outline of what was found reasonable for us to expect can be given here.

To the heart burdened by a sense of utter unworthiness to claim any of God's mercies, the assurance of *pardon*,—that, "If we confess our sins he is willing and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," is like oil upon troubled waters, filling the soul with "*peace which passeth all understanding*."

In 1 Cor. x, 13 Paul gives us a blessed assurance of *strength* to resist the temptations that beset us and his own experience in times of trial, together with the hope that constantly buoyed him up is thus recorded: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed" * * * * "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things

which are seen but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Such strength may not be ours before the trial comes—but when we need it; "Not dying grace before death but grace for death when the hour comes." "As thy day so shall thy strength be."

We may also expect God's blessing and guidance in temporal as well as spiritual things, so far as these duties are based upon right principles and we are adopted to our chosen spheres. We should not however, selfishly choose and then ask God to bless our choice. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" because "a good man" will submit all to the Lord with full confidence that all things will work together for good; and so by faith he is able to rejoice whether in tribulation or prosperity.

"He leadeth me! Oh! blessed thought, Oh! words with heavenly comfort fraught;

Whate'er I do, where'er I be,

Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

Most sacred are God's promises to hear and answer *prayer* but these promises are based upon important conditions which we do well to consider. "If ye shall ask anything *in my name* I will do it." *If ye abide in me and my words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." "The eyes of the Lord are upon the *righteous* and his ears are open unto their cry." God is too just to grant every personal desire,—to feed every selfish ambition. Even the heart's holiest hopes and purest aspirations need to be submitted with an earnest "Not as I will but as thou wilt," for only in the light of Infinite wisdom can the ultimate outcome of all such hopes be known. But with the tho't constantly before us that whatever we do should be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus" we may pursue life's duties and plan for His work confidently expecting Him to hear and bless.

And finally, "This is the record, that God hath given to us *eternal life*, and this life in his son." To him that *overcometh* will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."

May our hearts be open to receive the full measure of God's love, that even unto us may be verified the prophets' message: Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse * * * and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Des Moines, Ia.

BY CHRIST AND FOR CHRIST.

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DEAR SISTER HOUSER:—Yours of 12 inst. reached me yesterday. It made my heart glad. It is a fresh testimony that God is blessing my pen-ministry, and that you have received a fresh illumination direct from the Fountain of Light. God is a gracious father and a wise teacher, and adopts His grace and providence to our capacities and necessities. You were not baptized too young, but like most early converts, you were not properly cared for and nurtured in the Lord after your admission. "Feed my lambs" is one of the most neglected commandments. As the mind unfolds, and a larger vision of Christ comes within our horizon, the more awful becomes our conception of the Divine Holiness, the more appalling and hateful becomes sin. You have remained sixteen years stationary, and now a flood of light has surged into your soul, and in its effulgence you see God and yourself as never before. Be not disheartened, but thank God on this behalf. "It is the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes." You are only having a new and ampler installment of Paul's great prayer for the Ephesians. See Eph. i, 17 to 20. If you are faithful this will not be the last apocalypse of light with which God will bless you. And each new revelation of the glory of holiness will also bring a fresh evolution of "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." This is the divine method of spiritual education, and it is not limited to this terrestrial sphere; forever and forever the redeemed soul will stand before the mirror of II Cor. iii, 18, and be transformed more and more into the divine image from glory to glory. The high-